

**Council on Postsecondary Education
Quality and Accountability Policy Group
May 21, 2007**

Education Doctorates for Kentucky

Several of Kentucky's comprehensive universities have indicated their interest in offering doctoral degrees in educational leadership (Ed.D.) to serve their region and the Commonwealth. A series of discussions on the issues surrounding such offerings and the Ed.D. in general have been undertaken to ensure that this significant shift in graduate education in the state is pursued in a way that is collaborative, focused on Kentucky's needs, and consistent with best practices nationally.

Background

There are five institutions currently that have posted or pre-posted proposals for an Ed.D. program in the Kentucky Postsecondary Program Proposal System. In addition, the University of Kentucky and the University of Louisville jointly applied to be included in a Carnegie Foundation initiative to redesign the education doctorate. They were two of 20 institutions selected nationally. The Council staff is interested in expanding this involvement to include the comprehensive institutions.

National Environment

In his article, "Reclaiming Education's Doctorates: A Critique and a Proposal," Lee Shulman, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, writes, "For years, the field of education has struggled to strike a balance between the practice of education and research in education in crafting doctoral programs to meet the needs of a diverse student population." Later, he adds:

Although most students in Ed.D. programs do not aim to be researchers, their doctoral programs often treat them as such by offering experiences more similar to Ph.D. programs than to the high-level preparation for practice or leadership found in other learned professions. Too often, the Ed.D. is defined by subtraction, with fewer requirements than the Ph.D. and much less emphasis on full-time study and residency. Nevertheless, the capstone requirement is some form of dissertation, although practitioners are unlikely ever to be asked to produce research like it again. Instead of being valued for accomplishing the discrete ends it was originally designed for, the Ed.D. is widely regarded as a "Ph.D.-Lite."

Similar criticisms of the traditional Ed.D. have been raised in other studies, including Arthur Levine's "Educating School Leaders." Levine, former president of the Teachers College at Columbia University and current president of The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, reviewed Ed.D. programs across the nation and found them to be severely lacking. He writes:

This study found the overall quality of educational leadership programs in the United States to be poor. The majority of programs range from inadequate to appalling, even at some of the country's leading universities.... Their curricula are disconnected from the needs of leaders and their schools. Their admission standards are among the lowest in American graduate schools. Their professoriate is ill equipped to educate school leaders. Their programs pay insufficient attention to clinical education and mentorship by successful practitioners. The degrees they award are inappropriate to the needs of today's schools and school leaders. Their research is detached from practice. And their programs receive insufficient resources.

These and other commentaries make it clear that a new approach to educational leadership programs is required to meet the needs of today.

Current Activity

House Joint Resolution 14 (HJR 14), which was passed in the spring of 2006, requires that an interagency task force, led by the Education Professional Standards Board, be commissioned to collaborate with public and independent postsecondary education institutions for the redesign of preparation programs and the professional development of educational leaders. Section 1(5)(c) of HJR 14 calls for the "alignment of doctoral programs in education with the redesigned master's and other leadership programs to ensure rigor and relevance." This redesign must inform the creation of any new doctoral program in education.

As of May 2007, the workgroups of the task force, including the one focused on doctoral education, are completing the final drafts of their reports. The Council staff has been involved in the crafting of this draft and in surveys of potential applicants for Ed.D. programs and potential employers of graduates from those programs. Those surveys were an attempt to gauge the level of need for additional Ed.D. programs in the state among the P-12 audience. Kentucky is behind surrounding states in terms of production of doctoral degrees in education. Kentucky is 14th of the 16 Southern Regional Education Board states and 35th in the nation.

The first survey, sent to 7,049 potential applicants to Ed.D. programs (all with active certifications in the principal leadership area), was responded to by 23 percent (1,614) of these potential applicants. Of these, 33 percent (533) indicated they were considering enrolling in an Ed.D. program in the next three years. The second survey was sent to 1,336 individuals (superintendents, school board members, and school-based council members)

with responsibility for hiring educational leaders to determine the future market for Ed.D. graduates and the perceived value of the Ed.D. as a hiring criterion. Approximately 29 percent (384) of potential employers responded to the survey. Of 15 criteria for administrative success (ability to foster a climate for success, interpersonal skills, instructional leadership skills, etc.), an Ed.D. degree was ranked last, with only 8 percent of respondents rating the degree as extremely important. The Ed.D. was ranked seventh of seven hiring criteria (including master's degree in educational leadership and/or academic content area, previous work experience, and professional development credentials).

The Council staff is working to ensure that any new proposals for doctoral degrees are aligned with the work of the task force. The review of current proposals has been postponed by the staff in order to ensure alignment with the task force's recommendations. The criteria are expected to emphasize the need for high levels of collaboration among institutions to most effectively and efficiently provide doctoral opportunities to P-12 personnel. The Council staff anticipates engaging external evaluators in the review of new proposals in order to ensure that programs reflect best practice and that the needs of the Commonwealth will be met.

Next Steps

In discussions with institutional leadership about proposals to offer Ed.D.s, the Council staff has consistently articulated five general questions that will guide its review of proposals for new doctorates in educational leadership:

- Is the proposal consistent with Kentucky's Public Agenda for Postsecondary and Adult Education?
- Is there a need for new doctorates?
- Does the proposing institution have the programmatic and fiscal capacity to offer the program?
- Can the program be done better by another institution?
- Can the program be offered in collaboration with another institution?

In order to ensure that this significant shift in the Commonwealth's graduate education is pursued in a way that is both collaborative and focused on Kentucky's needs, the Council staff is proposing to review both new proposals and existing Ed.D. programs under the Education Doctorates for Kentucky. This program will include standard features applicable to all approved programs that will ensure effective coordination of program delivery, maximum flexibility for students in scheduling and course-taking, efficient use of resources by institutions, and periodic review of approved programs to monitor consistency with program requirements and with changes in circumstances.

This program could align with several alternative options for delivery, such as stand-alone programs, collaborative programs, joint programs, and standardized degrees.

The Council staff believes a focus on a joint or standardized degree format will best ensure all programs meet the needs of the state. The standardized degree program provision is found in KRS 164.037. The statute reads:

The Council on Postsecondary Education may identify academic programs offered at institutions to which the criteria for a standardized degree program shall be applied.

(1) If the Council determines that a particular degree program offered by any state postsecondary institution shall be a standardized degree program, then the Council shall direct each institution offering the degree program to collaborate under the direction of the Council and establish the courses and the course content required for that degree program.

(2) If the various institutions cannot agree upon the courses required or the content of the courses, then the Council shall make these determinations.

(3) All courses approved for a standardized degree shall be transferable among all institutions granting that degree.

Proposals for Ed.D.s will be reviewed by nationally recognized external consultants to ensure that they align with the format of a standardized degree and with principles found in EPSB's Education Leadership Redesign Task Force report.

In addition to the five questions above that will guide the program approval process, the following criteria are provided to assist institutions in their preparation of programs. These are adapted from the draft criteria included in EPSB's Education Leadership Redesign Task Force report.

1. Program Design

- A. Rigorous and relevant prerequisites for admission.
- B. Seamless transfer options for students, allowing them to take courses from any approved program and have them count toward the degree.
- C. Cohort or open model of registration, including minimum requirements for viability of program.
- D. A detailed program of study.
- E. Description of culminating experience or dissertation appropriate to the needs of the constituencies served.
- F. Demonstration of a fully aligned relationship between the redesigned master's and doctoral programs.
- G. Program tracks that acknowledge the diversity of applicants' background experiences and prior knowledge.
- H. Articulated agreements with local school districts, cooperatives, and other regional partners that ensure substantive field experience.

2. Program Content

- A. Be interdisciplinary and collaborative across institutions and agencies, calling on a wide variety of resources.
- B. Have rigorous curriculum standards, with identified competencies, and cohort-based instructional methods that motivate and engage students, with a focus on dynamic instructional leadership, all with a flexible schedule to accommodate working professionals.
- C. Blend theoretical and research knowledge with applied analytical skills (research knowledge should be used to improve school practice).
- D. Focus on data-based decision making, the efficient use of technology for management and instruction, and the establishment of virtual learning communities.
- E. Help leaders work collaboratively and inclusively with teachers, parents, students, and the community to create productive learning environments.

3. Capacity

- A. Faculty
 - 1) Appropriate qualifications of present and pending faculty, including rank, degrees, experience, and relevant scholarship.
 - 2) Appropriate balance between full- and part-time faculty in the program, ensuring quality and consistency for the students.
 - 3) Description of the support and resources that will be provided to aid in the inculcation of a doctoral education culture within the department and institution, and the preparation of faculty to chair student committees.
- B. Resource Requirements
 - 1) Demonstration of financial viability.
 - a) Total costs for students, including options for student financing.
 - b) Start-up costs.
 - c) Financial impact on institution.
 - d) Minimum number of students required to make program viable, accounting for attrition.
 - 2) Evidence of sufficient graduate student support, including availability of external funding.

4. Components Specific to Joint Programs

- A. Agreements must be clear regarding which entities have decision-making responsibilities in which areas and how differences will be resolved.
- B. Jointly developed set of criteria for faculty participation in the program.
- C. Admissions decisions must be made jointly and must be unified from a student perspective.
- D. Advisors must be located at all institutions.
- E. Residency must be clearly defined and may or may not involve physical presence at one or more institutions.
- F. Agreement must be clear on how tuition and fees are paid and allocated.
- G. Curricular requirements must be established jointly.

- H. Dissertation or culminating experience standards and procedures must be developed jointly, including the types of research deemed acceptable.
- I. Committee membership must be equitable, with procedures for exceptions.
- J. Memorandum of agreement must be completed to guide administration of the program.

It should be noted that doctoral offerings at any of Kentucky's comprehensive universities will require meeting additional Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' regional accreditation standards. Those requirements focus on increased capacity in faculty and support structures.

Three years after program approval, the Council would conduct a review using nationally recognized experts, students, P-12 district personnel, and others to assess the statewide programs and individual institutions' integration of and compliance with the standardized components of the education doctorate. Programs found not in compliance would be asked to correct any areas of deficiency or risk having the authority to offer the degree withdrawn.

Kentucky stands at a crossroads regarding educational leadership in the state. As state agencies have worked with the legislature to reform these programs at the master's level, it is incumbent on the postsecondary system to come together to create a program for doctoral level education that serves Kentuckians in an efficient and effective manner. Following discussion by the Quality and Accountability Policy Group, the Council staff will prepare an agenda item for consideration by the Council at the July meeting.